REMARKS

This paper responds to the first Office Action following Applicant's request for continued examination. Claims 1-3 and 5-12 are pending, including independent claims 1, 7 and 9. Claims 7 and 8 have been allowed, and dependent claims 6 and 12 were objected to but were found to contain patentable subject matter. The remaining claims were rejected on the basis of a new combination of prior art.

Specifically, claims 1-3, 5, and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over newly cited USP 6,653,948 ("Kunimatsu") and Mutoh. Applicant disagrees with this rejection. In particular, Kunimatsu does not display a reason why menu items cannot be selected.

Claim 1 recites a vehicle navigation apparatus in which, inter alia, when only a predetermined amount of data can be registered in a memory to execute a function corresponding to a menu item and when said predetermined amount of data is already registered in said memory, a message indicating that said menu item cannot be selected due to memory limitations is displayed in the field of said menu item for registering data. Independent claim 9 corresponds to claim 1, but recites, inter alia, that when data that is set in a memory is to be read to have a predetermined function executed and when no data is set in said memory, a message indicating that said menu item cannot be selected due to no data being set in said memory is displayed in the field of said menu item for registering data. Thus, Applicant's invention avoids the possibility that the user becomes frustrated and confused because he/she does not know why a function is disabled and wrongly thinks the apparatus is broken.

Kunimatsu is directed to a vehicle-mounted display system which can display an operation menu (see Abstract; col. 6, lines 53-67). Some menu items can be operated only when the vehicle is not moving. When the vehicle is moving, the menu items that cannot be operated cannot be selected, and the names ("characters") of those items are not displayed (e.g., col. 7, line 53 to col. 8, line 29; Fig. 4; col. 9, line 53 to col. 10, line 2). The passage cited by the Examiner (col. 8, lines 1-25) does <u>not</u> teach that a reason is displayed when a menu item cannot be selected. In fact, Kunimatsu describes just

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the opposite – the menu item is <u>left entirely blank</u> (see, e.g., the blank choices in Figs. 4D and 4E).

Regarding claim 1, the Examiner agrees that Kunimatsu does not teach when only a predetermined amount of data can be registered in a memory and when said predetermined amount of data is already registered in said memory, a message indicating that said menu item cannot be selected due to memory limitations is displayed in the field of said menu item for registering data, but asserts that the mode of operation in Kunimatsu "determines which data is currently being registered in a memory." However, the passages cited by the Examiner do not support this assertion, but rather describe the operation of Kunimatsu as Applicant has explained above (or in the case of the passage at col. 10, lines 14-30, describes that a "Search Again" item is displayed if a "Search" item has already been operated).

Applicant also disagrees that Mutoh discloses this feature of claim 1 as the Examiner asserts. The passage at col. 7, lines 30-50 describes the example of Fig. 3B in which the multi-function machine is performing a printer function. The copier function and the fax function are stated to be "partly available" in the display, but there is not displayed an identification of what partial functionality is not available or why it is not available. The passage at col. 10, lines 25-51 describes the example of Fig. 5D in which the printer function and the copier function are both engaged. The fax function is not available to <u>transmit</u>, but <u>is</u> available to <u>receive a fax in memory</u>. This is contrary to the Examiner's assertion. The passage at col. 11, lines 45-55, describing Figs. 6-8, similarly describes the ability of the machine to operate multiple functions at the same time.
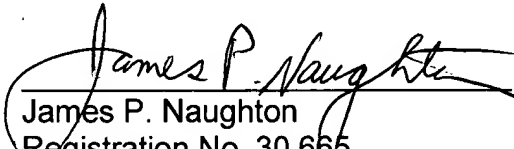
None of the Mutoh passages cited by the Examiner describes displaying a message indicating that a menu item cannot be selected because memory limitations associated with the menu item have been filled. Applicant notes that some Figures of Mutoh refer to a "processing volume" that might relate to the amount of data being processed for a particular function, but there is no statement in Mutoh of disabling a function because memory limitations would be exceeded and reporting that fact in a displayed menu.

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Regarding independent claim 9, the Examiner asserts that the combination of Kunimatsu and Mutoh describe displaying a message that a menu item cannot be selected because no data for the menu item is in the memory. Applicant disagrees. The passage in Kunimatsu that is cited by the Examiner (col. 7, lines 55-65) only describes that certain items on the operation menu are shown as inhibited depending on whether the vehicle is traveling or not. There is no discussion of a menu item not being operational because no data is set in a memory. Further, Mutoh does not describe displaying a message indicating such a situation, as explained above.

Nevertheless, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 9 to further clarify these features and the distinctions over the cited art. Claim 5 has also been amended for clarification and to avoid awkward wording.

In summary, Applicant submits that the claims, as amended herein, are patentable over the cited art. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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